



## Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Council

An advisory committee to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

### Meeting Minutes December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

DNR Main Office: Mason Bldg. 530 W. Allegan St. Lansing, MI 48933

#### **MEMBERS**

Angela Ayers  
Joan Chadde  
Bert Cregg,  
Marshall Baeckeroot  
Pam Blough  
Nancy Carpenter  
Bill Drews  
Ryan Edwards  
Kerry Gray - Chair  
Dean Hay  
Lee Mueller  
Steve Snell  
Michael Sterling  
Tyler Stevenson  
Mary Wilson

#### **DNR STAFF**

Kevin Sayers  
UCF Program Coord.  
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Ada Takacs  
Volunteer Coord.  
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State of Michigan  
DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
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#### **Present for Council:**

Pam Blough, Nancy Carpenter, Mike Sterling, Bert Cregg,  
Ryan Edwards, Joan Chadde, Angela Ayers, Tyler Stevenson,  
Kerry Gray, Mary Wilson, Bill Drews, Lee Mueller

#### **Absent: Steve Snell, Dean Hay, Marshall Baeckeroot**

#### **Present for DNR Staff:**

Kevin Sayers, Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator  
Ada Takacs, Volunteer Programs Coordinator

#### **Other Attendees:**

Lisa Perez US Forest Service (USFS)

#### **Approval of Agenda:**

Gray presented the meeting agenda for review/approval.  
Sayers requested addition of update on annual Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program accomplishment report to agenda.  
Motion made by Mike Sterling, seconded by Angela Ayers, to approve agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of the March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Council meeting were reviewed.  
Motion made by Bill Drews, seconded by Tyler Stevenson to approve minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Communication/Public Comment:**

None

#### **Host Welcome:**

N/A

## **Organizational Items:**

### Membership Terms/Vacancies

Sayers presented the status of current membership, expiring terms, and vacancies and welcomed newest members including Joan Chadde (Michigan Tech Univ. - Education), Mary Wilson (MSU Extension – MSU Extension), Lee Mueller (Friends of Grand Rapids Parks [FOGRP] - Nonprofit).

### *Action Item(s):*

- None

### Fall/Winter Community Canopy Newsletter

Sayers and Takacs presented a draft of the Council newsletter for review/comment.

- Several typos (e.g. member names, DNR name etc.) need to be fixed.
- Add Lee Mueller (new member) to letterhead
- Expand contact info. for members on letterhead
- Suggestion of adding a table of contents to future newsletter
- Suggestion of adding a spotlight section to highlight recent grant project outcomes.
- Suggestion of using GovDelivery for future distribution
- Need to determine what we want the newsletter to be, how it will be used etc...

### *Action Item(s):*

- Form subcommittee (Sayers, Ayers, Takacs, Gray, Chadde, Perez, Blough) to address issues.

## **Old Business:**

### Budget

K. Sayers reported the status of all federal program funding:

- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Earmark - Lapsed \$75K out of \$250K EAB project. Money had to be used along traffic corridor from Ohio to Detroit. Work completed along I-75 and US-23 between two states.
- **FY 10 Core funding** – Lapse \$17 out of \$300K grant
- **FY 11 Core funding** – Current balance is \$12K. Exp. 9/30/2013. Will allocate this through grants
- **FY 12 Core funding** – Current balance is \$173K exp. 9/20/2014. A large amount will be allocated to grant awards.
- **FY 13** - Have not received financial advice from US FS yet. Anticipate receiving it in Spring 2013.
- DNR UCF program is funded entirely through federal dollars- the State provides housing for the program but no cash funding. For FY14- DNR Forest Management Division made a request for \$100k in State funding for the UCF program. This money may be used to add an additional staff person to the program possibly working in southeast Michigan.
  - Should Council send a letter in support of this funding request?

### *Action Item(s):*

- Sayers will provide update on FY13 budget as federal financial advice is received from USFS.
- Sayers will find out and report on possibility of having council send letter to DNR/State leg. in support of additional funding request.

#### General DNR Staffing News

- New DNR Director- Keith Creagh
- New Forest Management Chief/State Forester - Bill O'Neill. Scott Heather is new Asst. chief.
- Tackas moved from Roscommon office to Grawn (Traverse City area)

#### FY 12 MI UCF Program Accomplishment Report

Sayers reported on the annual program accomplishments for FY12 and related trends:

- Purpose of Community Forestry Grant (CFG) program is to build communities capacity to manage their urban forest continuously locally without federal support.
- Components of urban forest program:
  - Professional staff
  - Management Plan
  - Ordinances
  - Advisory organization (city department or group)
- \*Communities having 1 component & assisted = developing. Communities having all 4 = managing
- In FY12, MI increased percentage of 'Managing' communities/population (42.6%)
- Slight decrease in percentage of 'Developing' communities/population (29.4%, -3.2% FY11)
- Many of the measurable program accomplishments and outcomes (community advisory groups, ordinances, management plans etc.) will fluctuate slightly but long-term trend is growth.
- Probably underreporting and tracking volunteer effort. However, this metric is of debatable significance.

#### *Action Item(s):*

- *Request was made to compare MI info. to other states and nationally. Sayers will do for next mtg.*

#### **New Business:**

##### MI Urban Forestry Management and Awards Conference

- Every two years, UCF Program has a day long conference and Tree City USA Awards banquet.
- In 2013 the program will be offering a urban forest management workshop with Davey Resource Group (DRG) along with the awards banquet.
- Location – Lansing area
- Date - anticipated in mid-April.
- Focus on management tools that are available and the work that DRG has been doing with i-Tree Eco, i-Tree Streets and the Detroit Inventory, all in Michigan.

#### *Action Item(s):*

- *Sayers will send out draft agenda when it has been developed for Council review*

##### Arbor Day Foundation's (ADF) Energy Saving Trees program

Sayers and Mueller provided background and overview of new national initiative from ADF.

- Research based tool that shows how to improve energy savings by strategically placing trees around your home. Similar to Nat'l Tree Benefit Calculator.
- Program rolled out at recent national conference (Partners in Community Forestry).
- Interfaces with Google maps. Input what tree you would like to plant and it will show you on Google maps where the best locations are to plant the tree for energy savings.
- Idea is that utilities will provide incentives to plant trees in these zones.

- 12 utility companies around the country are participating but none in Michigan. Tool does not function in Michigan because there is not utility that is participating yet.
- Great opportunity to get messages out about energy efficiency benefits of using trees
- Need to contact ADF for further details on how the program will work and how to bring on new utilities.
- Need to discuss with MI utilities and determine their awareness and interest and encourage participation.

*Action Item(s):*

- *Gray, Sayers, Mueller, Stevenson will work together to target MI utilities with info.*

MI Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) S2 Grants and Nonpoint Source Revolving Loan Fund

Gray provided background and overview of the City of Ann Arbor's use of DEQ Nonpoint Source Revolving Loan fund program for tree planting.

- Significant source of funding with potential use in community greening and stormwater issues.
- Michigan's Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund, better known as the State Revolving Fund (SRF), is a low 2% interest loan financing program that assists qualified local municipalities with the construction of needed water pollution and control facilities.
- Projects must fit within existing local/regional watershed plans approved by DEQ.
- To apply for SRF loan, a final project plan must be submitted to the DEQ before July 1 to be considered for funding in the next fiscal year. As of October 1, 2012, SRF had provided low interest loans for 467 projects, totaling \$3.9 billion.
- Pros and cons to using this fund
- The City of Ann Arbor collaborates with the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner to draft a State Revolving Fund (SRF) plan. This plan is a submittal to the DEQ which includes a list of projects as potential "low-interest" loan submittals. The SRF program is a funding mechanism that allows the City to finance project costs, including construction, over a period of 20-years at an estimated 2%. The bonus part of the SRF program is the potential for "Green" funding, which is loan principle forgiveness of up to 50% of the environmental portion of a project.
- In 2010, Ann Arbor included tree planting in the SRF Plan and the project was approved by the DEQ and would be eligible for funding for the next 5 years. The City began utilizing the SRF funding in 2011 and has received approximately \$315,000 per year in funding in both 2011 and 2012. Both years of funding have received 50% loan forgiveness. By Spring 2013 when the current SRF tree planting contract is completed, over 2200 trees will have been planted since 2011 at a cost of approximately \$630,000 and the City will only have to repay
- Bills pending in MI legislature that would shift some/all of the funding from loan program to grant program to increase participation.
- This, and similar other funding opportunities (e.g. MDOT, METRO ACT), should be more broadly announced via our newsletter, email and website.

*Action Item(s):*

- *Gray to provide electronic copy of SRF plan for City of Ann Arbor if the City has one.*
- *Sayers will create a separate section on program website highlighting funding opportunities w/focus on unique sources of funding like these.*

#### Community Forestry Grant (CFG) program revisions

Sayers advised that after this year's recently completed CFG grant reviews, the grant review committee suggested it would be a good to review/update the program and application to better serve needs and to clarify some issues.

- Several questions have come up recently about using funds for maintenance and tree injections, specifically for emerald ash borer etc. Currently, grants don't fund those activities.
- Tree removals cannot be funded but maintenance (e.g. trimming, treatments) can be.
- Some concern that this would take away from available tree planting funds.
- Some members concerned that maintenance should be funded by municipality and grants should not be relied upon.
- Suggestion that maintenance request should be tied to long-term community tree maintenance plans.

#### Action Item(s):

- *Form subcommittee for grant program revisions: Sayers, Gray, Mueller, Ayers, and Stevenson*

#### **FYI / Updates:**

#### Tree City/Line/Campus USA program applications

- Due 12/31/12
- Sayers is on national TC USA Standards revision committee working to review program.

#### Misc. Grants

- \$92K in CFG grants being awarded to MI communities, schools, nonprofits, etc... .
- DTE Energy Foundation Tree Planting Grant applications will be announced by end of month. Deadline in late Jan or Feb.
- Consumers Energy: Not everyone in their service territory is aware of these grants. Need to do a better job of advertising. Requires 50:50 match. Up to \$3k grant.
- 6 CARP proposals submitted by DNR to USFS with urban component. Awards in Feb.
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) proposals expected to be announced by USFS in early spring 2013

#### Arbor Day

- 4/26/13
- Sayers presented on the Fourth Grade Foresters seedling sponsorship/give away program and encouraged members to consider sponsoring a class in their area and promoting it to others.
- Fourth Grade Foresters- program to purchase seedlings (\$1.59) to give away to students. Organization is based in Lincoln, NE. The species available in MI is Norway Spruce.
- If people don't like species choice they can purchase trees through local Conservation District.

#### USFS Cooperative Program Review

- All DNR Cooperative Forestry programs being reviewed (audited) at end of Jan. 2013
- Last UCF program review was in 2003.

#### Lansing DNR staff to relocate

- DNR Lansing offices scheduled to relocate across the street to State-owned Const. Hall building within next 6-9 months.
- New contact info. (e.g. address and possibly phone) will be provided.

#### DNR Initiatives in Detroit

- DNR working w/City to obtain management authority of Belle Isle via lease arrangement. Currently, City Council is blocking this.
- Trail Network from Belle Isle to Ironwood- Governor's initiative/priority
- Globe Building- creating new DNR Parks and Rec. facility. Slated to open next Fall-Winter.
- Detroit inventory three quarters complete. Funding request to finish project recently sent to USFS.

#### Recent Conferences/events

- Sayers listed several events, presentation, conferences he's participated in over past few months (e.g. MI Forest Health workshop, Urban Forest Strike Team Training, MI Green Communities Conference, Partners in Community Forestry National conference).

#### **Member Updates:**

- Takacs
  - o Project Learning Tree (PLT) holding national conference in Traverse City in 2014
  - o Globe Building- Creating indoor State Park. Large interactive tree. Opening in 2014
- Blough
  - o Michigan Forestry and Park Assoc. (MFPA) has scholarship opportunities available for undergraduate and graduate students who are studying urban forestry.
  - o MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Alumni Board also has scholarship opportunities
- Cregg
  - o Greening of Detroit project- urban tree selection for a changing climate. Currently locating tree planting sites in Detroit. Funded through Project GREEN. Planting in the spring.
  - o Keep in mind MSU Horticulture and Forestry as partners on research projects.
- Chadde
  - o Urban Forest Stewardship Program in Detroit School overview.
  - o Need new funding to continue program. Is there any industry funding available?
- Carpenter
  - o MFPA annual ArborCon winter conference coming up – Feb. 19-20
  - o Will include equipment training to assist municipalities by providing a low cost training to maintain equipment to meet MIOSHA needs and regulations
- Ayers
  - o MDOT Enhancement program eliminated. New program Transportation Alternatives Program. Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) receiving \$5 million/year to run local level grant program to enhance transportation assets including, non-motorized paths, streetscape improvements. SEMCOG looking out how improvements will have an environmental benefit and green infrastructure benefits.
  - o Green Infrastructure Vision for SE Michigan
  - o Received updated land cover and tree canopy leaf-on data. Currently analyzing it.
  - o Project purpose to ID current conditions, set regional goals & plan how to get there.

- Detroit Water and Sewer Department (DWSD) - utilizing funds to plant trees as part of combined sewer overflow (CSO). DEQ is allowing tree planting to be used to offset stormwater runoff to meet permit requirements.
- Mueller
  - FOGRP is using the Open Tree Map (open source tree inventory program).
  - Allows public to add trees both public and private to tree inventory. When they input data they receive i-Tree Streets benefits.
  - Launched in early August 2012
  - Need to ID way to sustain contributors beyond inputting the trees on their property
- Drews
  - Attended workshop in Grand Rapids where Dave Roberts was speaker-- I didn't get the name of the workshop. Found out that Beech Bark Disease (BBD) in Frankfort area is moving faster than previously thought.

**Next Meeting(s):**

TBD (Doodle schedule announcement will come)

**Meeting Adjourned:**

12:08 PM

**Respectfully submitted:**

Kevin Sayers